

I Hate Weeds | June 2016



Spring is in full swing here in Grenoble, France and we have been spending a little bit of time cultivating the FEU garden out back. It's a good opportunity to talk with our neighbors, and to spend more time with students and other Christian workers in this area. In the garden this year, there are redcurrants, raspberries, squash, cucumbers, snap peas, green & hot peppers, tomatoes, and basil making their way up towards the sun. We'll plant carrots, radishes and beets in the next few days. It's a lot of work to get these fruits and vegetables to grow: cutting back the fall & winter growth, tilling the soil, planting the seeds, setting up protection from pests (I've killed well over 600 slugs just in the past few weeks) and making sure everything is getting the right amount of water every day. However, there is one thing that grows very easily in the garden: weeds.

Rusty is now almost 4 months old and getting bigger and stronger every day. We are so thankful for him and the joy he is bringing into our lives. He loves going for walks or runs in the jogger and for picnics in the bike trailer. We have monthly check-ups with a pediatrician and his health and size (thin but TALL) are perfect. He's the center of attention when we're out in town with little old ladies kissing his cheeks. He's rapidly expanding his baby vocabulary and loves to laugh and giggle when we make funny French sounds. He's a pro at tummy-time, loves to scoot around his little play mat and is beginning to figure out how to roll over. Rachel is also continuing to recover well and adjusting to life as a

new mom. **Pray for continued health for Rusty and Rachel and adjustment to this new normal.**

The school year has come to an end and many students have already returned home, gone on vacation or moved elsewhere to start internships. There are still a few around and the weekly Bible studies, discussion groups and bi-weekly food distributions are still going on through the end of June. We praise the Lord for the professions of salvation this year and others deciding to publicly declare their faith in Christ through baptism. **Pray for these students and others who have grown in their faith this past year, that they would continue on, strengthened and encouraged in the Lord.**

Taking care of a student house, in and of itself, is sometimes a full-time job. There has been more progress on the bathroom renovations and we should be wrapped up with the main floor shower by the end of this month. A number of smaller, yet important, maintenance jobs and repairs have come up on top of the weekly grounds keeping that seem to constantly sidetrack me from the bigger projects. We had a student work day last Saturday to thoroughly clean then repaint the main kitchen and to weed and re-mulch the front flower garden that had gotten a little out of control. It's encouraging to know that students and others who use the FEU enjoy a clean, organized and welcoming space. **Pray that we would be diligent and productive with the practical work that is needed here.**

We will be back in the US for the month of July to be with friends and family (in part, to introduce Rusty in person) and to share with our church families a little of what God has been doing here in France. This will be Rusty's first time travelling a long distance . . . by bus, airplane, and car. We think he's up for the challenge, but please **pray that Rusty would do well travelling and that everything would be as smooth as possible.**

I hate weeds. Unlike the fruits and vegetables that require daily work, weeds grow without any effort on our part at all! They're ugly and they don't produce any worthwhile fruit. Rather, they wrap themselves around good plants, choking the very life out of them and they prevent good fruit from reaching maturity or growing at all. It's useless to just cut the tops off the weeds to try and make everything look nice. As many of you know, you have to get them by their roots, and even then, sometimes you have to dig down deep to get the entire root, otherwise, they'll just grow back faster than ever. Even dead, cut-off weeds

harden and stay wrapped around good plants and sometimes cause damage when you try to remove them later. This year, we put ground cloth down around the plants. So far, it has worked great, but every little gap or tear in it is an opportunity for weeds to grow through, and they do. All of this work is worth it when thinking ahead to the tasty harvest of fresh fruits and vegetables to come. The snap peas are ready and the raspberries are just about to turn red.

I hate weeds. Do I hate sin in my life as much? Do I spend as much time digging down deep to root out even the hint of sin? Do I have measures in place to prevent sin from creeping in at all? Do I put sin aside and eagerly desire Spirit-produced life-giving fruit now and to come? Do you? The garden will never be completely free from the control of weeds, but through Jesus Christ, we can be set free from sin and its life-quenching control. This is the freedom of the Gospel that we preach.